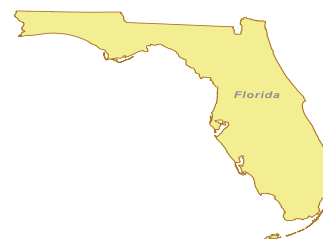


In January 2011, StudentsFirst released a “Policy Agenda” that advocates for a set of dramatic state and local policy changes in three critical areas proven to have the strongest results for students, in many cases building on the work of education reformers: teacher effectiveness, parental choice and governance/fiscal accountability. StudentsFirst works with selected states (partners on the ground, governors, interested legislators) to support policy development, bill introduction, issue campaigning and adoption of legislation. Specifically, the organization provides technical and advocacy support, deploying organizational resources in a concentrated and coordinated fashion.

Florida Legislative Wins for Students: 2011

In May 2011, Governor Rick Scott signed into law a sweeping education reform package, which included the StudentSuccess Act and other measures. The legislation makes significant strides on behalf of Florida students, specifically:



- Ends ‘Last-in, First-out’, seniority-based layoffs, basing future lay-offs completely on performance;
- Enhances the teacher evaluation system, requiring teacher evaluations be based at least 50% on student achievement growth;
- Expands parents’ choices by mandating open-enrollment policies across the state for children in failing public schools to move to higher-performing public schools;
- Ends teacher tenure for all new teachers hired after 2011;
- Creates a merit pay system based on teacher effectiveness and eliminates automatic bonuses based only on a teacher’s attainment of a master’s degree;
- Requires parental notification by school districts when children are assigned to an underperforming teacher;
- Ends forced placement of underperforming teachers into schools, giving principals the power to refuse those placements;
- Establishes greater transparency by publishing teacher performance ratings;
- Creates pathways for high performing charter schools to expand more easily; and
- Limits the administrative fees that school districts can charge to public charter schools to 3% of per pupil funding.

StudentsFirst Role

StudentsFirst’s relationship with Florida began with the appointment of Michelle Rhee to Governor Scott’s transition team, where she was asked to provide guidance in mapping out the education reform agenda for the state. StudentsFirst enjoys high-level access in the executive branch and the legislature, which was instrumental in the introduction of key components of the legislation above, and helped to secure passage of the whole package. StudentsFirst utilized the following strategies to move the Students Success Act and other critical measures forward:

- **Policy Development and Consultation.** StudentsFirst provided legislative sponsors with model legislation and on-going technical support.
- **Lobbying.** StudentsFirst employed an experienced Florida lobbyist to manage advocacy operations on the ground. In addition, CEO Rhee testified before the Florida State Legislature, including the Senate Pre K-12 Education Committee and the House K-12 Competitiveness Subcommittee. StudentsFirst also became involved during the House Senate conference sessions to push for support of charter school facilities funding.
- **Grassroots Mobilization.** StudentsFirst activated its 20,000 members in Florida whom, through five targeted e-mail “speakout” campaigns, sent more than 2,100 support e-mails directed to legislators. Members also provided testimony at committee meetings, made legislative visits and attended community meetings.
- **Earned Media.** StudentsFirst generated several op-ed and earned media pieces in Florida, the result of direct media outreach. Several blogs focused on Florida’s reforms, including a featured guest blog by Governor Jeb Bush.

FLORIDA			
Technical Support Policy Tools & Services		Advocacy Support Political & Grassroots Engagement	
Model Policy	✓	Press Release	
State Specific Policy	✓	Joint Press Release	
Policy Consultation	✓	Testify	✓
Staffing Advice	✓	State “Hub” Page	✓
		Member Activation	✓
		Live Rallies & GOTV	
Supplemental Support Resources & Funding		Earned Media/Local Press	✓
Paid Media		Polling	
Contribution		Field Team	
IE		Lobbyist	✓
Litigation Support			

Michelle continues to serve as an informal advisor to Governor Scott on education and StudentsFirst continues to work closely with state leadership and staff to prepare for the next phase of reforms in 2012.

Partners

StudentsFirst worked directly with the executive and legislative leadership in government, as well as the Commissioner’s Office. StudentsFirst partnered closely on policy matters with Foundation for Florida’s Future and Step Up for Students and the Florida Charter School Alliance. . On the grassroots front, StudentsFirst partnered with the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, HCREO, CHISPA and HELO.